

LISTING OF THE AMENDED CLAIMS

1-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Presently Amended) ~~The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the skull pin assembly further comprises~~ An apparatus for use with a radiolucent skull clamp supporting a head of a patient comprising:

a skull pin assembly adapted to be mounted to the skull clamp, the skull pin assembly comprising

a skull pin adapted to be movable into contact with the head of the patient;

an engagement shaft adapted to be slidable but not rotatable with respect to the skull clamp;

a lock nut threaded on an inner end of the engagement shaft to limit slidable motion of the engagement shaft in a direction extending outward from the skull clamp;

an insert adapted to be mounted to the skull clamp, the insert receiving and supporting the skull pin assembly; and

a pin load applicator adapted to be removably connectable to the skull clamp comprising

a loading shaft in mechanical communication with the skull pin,

a biasing element operable to apply a force on the loading shaft, the loading shaft in turn transferring the force to the skull pin contacting the head of the patient, and

a load force indicator connected to the loading shaft and providing an indication of the force being applied by the skull pin contacting the head of the patient, the loading shaft, the biasing element and the load force indicator being contained in a unitary component that is

connectable to and disconnectable from the skull clamp as a single component, the pin load applicator being movable to adjust the force applied by the skull pin contacting the head of the patient, and thereafter, the pin load applicator being removable from the skull clamp without changing the force being applied by the skull pin contacting the head of the patient.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the skull pin assembly further comprises a piston supported by the engagement shaft and connected to the skull pin.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the piston is threaded within the engagement shaft and movable to change a length of the skull pin assembly.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the skull pin is supported by an inner end of the piston.

15-17. (Cancelled)

18-24. (Previously Withdrawn)

25-26. (Cancelled)

27. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for use with a radiolucent skull clamp supporting a head of a patient comprising:

a skull pin assembly adapted to be mounted with respect to the skull clamp, the skull pin assembly comprising a skull pin adapted to be movable into contact with the head of the patient and a holder for holding the skull pin;

a lock mounted on and adjustable relative to the holder, the lock operable to prevent movement of the skull pin away from the head of the patient;

a pin load applicator removably connectable to the skull pin assembly and comprising a loading shaft in mechanical communication with the skull pin via the holder,

a biasing element operable to apply a force on the loading shaft, the loading shaft in turn transferring the force via the holder to the skull pin contacting the head of the patient, and

a load force indicator connected to the loading shaft and providing an indication of the force being applied by the skull pin contacting the head of the patient, the pin load applicator being movable to adjust the force applied by the skull pin contacting the head of the patient, so that the lock can then be adjusted relative to the holder so as to maintain said applied force, and thereafter the pin load applicator being removable from the skull pin assembly without changing said applied force being applied by the skull pin contacting the head of the patient.

28. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein said radiolucent skull clamp includes at least two such skull pin assemblies arranged on substantially opposite sides of the patient's head.

29. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the pin load applicator connects to the skull pin assembly outboard of the skull clamp and the lock is located inboard of the skull clamp.

30. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the holder has external threads and the lock is a nut sized to threadably engage the external threads of the holder.